



ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

Field Oral Hygiene

It is very important to maintain good oral hygiene in the field to prevent both tooth decay and gum disease. Toothbrush, toothpaste, and dental floss are available in the Health and Comfort Pack (HCP), Type I (NSN 8970-01-368-9154).

Your risk of tooth decay increases in the field:

- Rations have a high amount of starch and sugar.
- Bacteria in your mouth use starches and sugar to produce acids that cause tooth decay.
- Not brushing for just a few days can cause gingivitis (bleeding gums).
- If gum disease already exists, it can worsen.



Failure to clean the mouth can result in tooth decay, bad breath and swollen, painful, bleeding gums such as these. Photo courtesy of Carl Allen, D.D.S.

Field-friendly flossing

Flossing cleans the areas between the teeth and under the gums where brushing cannot reach. Floss to prevent both decay and gum disease.

- Use 12-18 inches of floss.
- Floss once per day, before brushing.
- Wrap the ends of the floss around your middle fingers.
- Use your index fingers to guide it between your teeth.



Field-friendly brushing

Brush at least twice daily with fluoridated toothpaste. Fluoride hardens the tooth enamel. You can brush without running water and a sink.

- Apply toothpaste to the dry toothbrush and brush all surfaces of the teeth thoroughly.
- Pour a small amount of water (about ½ cup) over the bristles to rinse them.
- **DO NOT** rinse your mouth after brushing.
- Don't eat or drink anything for at least 30 minutes after brushing. The fluoride will stay on your teeth longer and protect the surfaces of your teeth better.



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